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ABSTRACT

This master's thesis gives an overview of education in India from ancient times to the present and presents data from brief visits to seven schools which provide early childhood education in the Union Territory of Delhi. The schools visited were either parochial, public, government corporation, or private schools. Data collection problems (including time limitations and teacher apprehension) are noted. The programs are described, and a brief discussion of the relation of program effectiveness and program goals is given. It is concluded that the emphasis on early childhood education in India is likely to remain strong. Appendix A contains an observation outline used in the Indian preschools. Appendix B lists interview questions. Appendix C presents syllabi, guidelines, or objectives of three of the preschools visited. A brief public school entrance test is reproduced in Appendix D. Appendix E notes that a slide/tape program describing the preschools discussed in the thesis is available. (RH)

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A PAPER

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

BY

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DENTON, TEXAS

MAY 1978

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Union Territory of Delhi, capital district of India, is a geographically small metropolitan area governed by two municipalities, New Delhi and Old Delhi. New Delhi is a section of recently constructed housing colonies, businesses, and embassy facilities, representing modern trends and Western tastes. The older city, commonly called Old Delhi, has existed since ancient times and represents the traditions and social conditions of the majority of the nation's urban centers.

While the preschool education programs in the capital district are not as impressive or as varied as those found in Bombay and in Madras, the city does offer a cross-sectional view of child development practices which are currently used in most Indian early childhood education programs. Unlike the other cities, education for young children has existed at this location for thousands of years. Thus, the Union Territory of Delhi provides a unique source for descriptions of preschool education programs typical of India since antiquity.

Ancient Times to 1750

Preschool education in India has evolved from cultural traditions as old as recorded history. Excavations southwest of Delhi in the state of Rajasthan have produced evidence of a "highly developed city culture" (Hürlimann, 1975, p. 12). This culture was already flourishing when invaders from countries north of India entered the subcontinent in "1500 B.C." (Grun, 1975, p. 3). Following subjugation of the local Dravidian populace, these wandering Aryan tribes settled in the locality of the present capital district and its surrounding regions. Through utilization of the local resources in combination with their own culture, they were able to develop a rich, religiously oriented society.

Knowledge of the secular and religious life-style of the Indo-Aryans has been carefully preserved in the three thousand hymns of the Rig-Veda, a collection of ancient scriptures. The tenets of the Rig-Veda are the core of traditions, laws, and philosophies which have developed into Hinduism, India's major religion. Through the Vedic verses comes an explanation of the origin of the caste system, a social structure which was devised by the Indo-Aryans and continues to permeate Indian society. As the Vedic scriptures prescribed, society was broadly divided

into four main castes. These were: Brahmans, who were the priests, philosophers, and administrators; Kshatriyas, who were the warriors and princes; Vaishyas, who were the tradesmen; and Sudras, who served as the laboring class. Hürlimann (1975) stated the following:

> According to the Rig-Veda, when the primeval man was sacrificed [by the gods at the beginning of the world], from his head came the Brahmans, from his arms came the Kshatriyas, from his loins the Vaishyas, and from his feet the Sudras. (p. 13)

This rationale was successfully used by the tall, fair-skinned conquerors to place the darker-skinned natives at the foot of the social ladder. In fact, the majority of the Dravidians were not assigned a caste at all. These people without caste became serfs and slaves. Skin color and/or racial discrimination seems to have been a goal of the caste system, for the ancient Sanskrit term denoting caste, varma, is also translated as "color."

An awareness of the basis of the caste philosophy is pertinent to an understanding of the place of education in the society of ancient India. Education became a means to strengthen and perpetuate the caste system, primarily due to the fact that the Brahmans had absolute control over

who should learn the sacred teachings of the Rig-Veda. It was also in their power to determine what parts of the verses of knowledge should be taught to the other three castes. The non-caste people were not taught. Another factor related to education which contributed to the supremacy of the higher caste(s) was the method of communicating information from teacher to student. Knowledge was transferred through the oral tradition. Apte (1965) pointed out, "the art of writing was very probably known to the Vedic Indians, but it played no part in the educational system" (p. 459). Though the oral method was most likely an economical measure derived from the scarcity of writing materials, Altekar (1975) wrote, "the use of writing for the preservation of sacred literature was tabooed for a long time" (p. 174). Lower castes, therefore, could not obtain the sacred knowledge through books.

During the early childhood stage, children of all castes were highly regarded and led a pampered existence. Basham (1959) quoted an ancient passage from the Upanishads:

> With their teeth half shown in causeless laughter, and their efforts at talking so sweetly uncertain, when children ask to sit on his lap a man is blessed. Even by the dirt from their bodies. (p. 161)

This state of affairs was short lived. As soon as they were past the toddler stage, low caste children of both sexes began to work. High caste males began their education. Authorities agree that high caste females were not formally educated.

Up until 200 B.C., the "education ritual was performed at age five or six" (Altekar, 1975, p. 178), though this may have fluctuated. Basham (1959) gave the age as early as the "fourth" year (p. 161). The discrepancy may result from Apte's (1965) findings that age was sometimes counted from "conception" rather than birth (p. 525).

Young boys were introduced to learning by means of a carefully executed ritual. Apte (1965) wrote, "vedic study, service to the teacher, and chastity were the principal duties of bramacharian [student]." He described the ceremony as follows:

(1) formal acceptance of the pupil by the teacher at request of the former [i.e., the pupil]

(2) entrusting of the pupil to the care of certain deities

(3) the vows and duties to be discharged by the pupil while residing in the house of

> the guru [teacher], such as putting fuel on the fire, and begging for alms (p. 459)

The dress of the initiated was a part of the ceremony. It consisted of an animal skin garment, worn over a colored cloth undergarment. The specific details of the student's uniform were designated according to caste (Apte, 1965, p. 520).

Following the initiation ritual, the child took up residence in his teacher's home for the duration of his training. According to Altekar (1975), the youngest boys were called "darakacharys" and their training areas were termed "lipisotas," meaning alphabet schools (p. 180). In exchange for board and lodging, the students gave their teachers gifts at the completion of training.

The students were expected to be absolutely devoted to the teacher and were completely under his control. Altekar (1975) supported the theory that this relationship of the pupil and teacher was enhanced due to the fact that fathers often instructed their own sons (p. 523).

The regimen of schooling was difficult, as the daily routine consisted of literary, physical, and moral training. Daily activities, Apte (1965) stated, included "collecting fuel, looking after the sacrificial fires, tending the house of the teacher, and practicing austerities" (p. 521).

The begging of alms, historians agree, was a duty the young boys performed for character development. The act had nothing to do with the financial status of either the student or the teacher.

The curriculum for the youngest students began with the study of Vedic mantras. The children listened to the teacher pronounce the verses and repeated the words after him. Explanations of the words came at a later stage of training. Kabir (1971) stated, "to recite the words of the scripture was more meritorious than to understand it" (p. 181). Rote learning and repetition were the preferred instructional techniques. The sounds of the teacher and chorus of students has been compared to the croaking of frogs in the famous Frog Hymn of the Rig-Vedas (Apte, 1965, p. 394).

Another addition to the early childhood curriculum was noted about 200 B.C. Writing and numbers became formalized in a second religious ceremony, performed after the pupil took residence in the teacher's house (Mookerji, 1968, p. 583). "Boys studied primary and compound alphabet for six months, then a year was spent in mastering elementary arithmetic" (Altekar, 1975, p. 178). Verma (1969) reported the following activities were part of the youngest boys education:

1. Making garlands
2. Making designs in leaves to decorate forehead
3. Playing with water, sprinkling water on others
4. Stirring water to make musical sounds
5. Playing with dolls attached to threads
6. Playing with a musical instrument and beating the drums
7. Playing with dolls and ball
8. Disguising oneself by changing one's voice
9. Wearing such clothes as may deceive others about the identity of the person
10. Participating in dramatics and stories (pp. 206-207)

As the children became competent in these areas, writing was introduced by using sand tracing and tracing the teacher's writing on a palm leaf. Moral training was handled through the dramatizations of tales and heroes.

Writings during the period ending in 320 A.D. suggest that learning was based on sequential steps. The first four of nine steps described by Mookerji (1968) seem to relate to the education of young children:

1. Sasrusha--eagerness to listen to the words of a teacher as they fall from his lips
2. Sravanam--grasping by the ear the lessons of the teacher
3. Grahanam--apprehension [perception] of the teacher's words
4. Dharanam--retention (pp. 583-584)

The remaining steps dealt with understanding and comprehension, which were cognitive abilities taught to older boys.

Apte (1965) listed educational goals reflecting on character:

1. truthfulness
2. observance of a deity
3. devotion to one's parents
4. hospitality
5. faith
6. generosity
7. devotion to one's teacher (p. 459)

As previously mentioned, girls were not educated as a general rule, though girls of high castes were taught to dance and sing. The assumption that many had "sufficient opportunities [in the home] for acquiring proficiency in general learning" (Goshal, 1970, p. 567) is supported by

the fact that several women poets emerged. Yet, most authors agree that education of female children was not viewed as necessary, especially since girls were given in marriage between the ages of eight and puberty.

The Buddhist influence occurring around 500 A.D. hardly affected early childhood education. Buddhists were taught in large classes in monastaries, while Hindu teachers kept relatively few children in their homes. At the highest point of educational emphasis, approximately 8 percent of the eligible Aryan community (males) were literate (Altekar, 1975, p. 186).

Medieval India, commencing about 1000 A.D., was a period of drastic change. The Arab conquest of North India brought Moslem rule. Government education efforts were established, but Altekar (1975) pointed out that those efforts were "confined to the moslem section of the population" (p. 186). Though references to the education of young children during this period have not been found, most likely the Hindu and Buddhist traditions continued. The status of all female children deteriorated under Moslem rule, to the lowest point in Indian history.

The next major change in the rule of India began in 1665, when the English based East India Company obtained a trading charter in South India (Hürlimann, 1975, p. 23).

Encouraged by rich goods and cheap labor, English interests spread quickly throughout the country. However, they felt no responsibility toward educating the Indians whose lands they purchased and over whom they eventually came to rule.

1750 to Present

It became increasingly important to Christian missionary societies to set up schools in India. Though they were first established to educate half-breed offspring of English traders and perhaps servant's children, they became the major means of conversion of the Indian people. Majumdar (1965) wrote, "liberal education . . . [was regarded] as the most fruitful means for the conversion of Indians to Christians, by making them conscious of their superstitions" (p. 32).

As knowledge of the English language was necessary to transact business with the English rulers, many Indians allowed their children to attend missionary schools. At the same time the traditional schooling was maintained by the Hindu and Buddhist devotees.

By 1835, the Western influence began to make Indian parents aware of the part government should play in education. Parents began to pressure authorities for government supported schools. "In 1835 only ten children

in every thousand received formal education in Delhi" (Majumdar, 1965, p. 60). Social pressure caused people to withdraw their children from the indigenous systems and enter them in parochial English-medium (language) schools. In 1882, the Hunter Commission (British) reviewed the Indian situation and suggested that a plan be formulated to introduce primary education on a mass scale (Majumdar, 1965, p. 65).

Lord Curzon, who was Viceroy of India at the turn of the century, created an Education Department in the Government of India. He tried to establish a comprehensive primary education program which would include kindergarten (Niak & Nurullah, 1974, p. 262). Lack of funds prevented the program from materializing.

In 1921, Gokale, an Indian leader, attempted to introduce compulsory education for boys. This was to be followed by education for girls. Again, funding difficulties prevented the plan from becoming a reality (Niak & Nurullah, 1974, p. 200).

Around the time of World War I, several Indian philosophers and educators developed schemes for a national education program in India. Sri Aurobindo, a prominent Indian philosopher, opposed the rigid conformity of the existing English influenced educational system.

Especially disconcerting to him was the means of discipline, which was often brutal to even the youngest children. He formulated the golden rule of Indian education, which is "to suggest and invite, not command or impose" (Verma, 1969, p. 259). Rabindranath Tagore, poet laureate of India who established an experimental school in Shantiniketan, was concerned with the natural needs of the child. He held many classes outdoors under a Banyan tree (Kripalani, 1971, p. 107). Dr. Annie Bessant, who migrated to India from England and took Indian citizenship, proposed and supported revolutionary ideas such as the fight for Indian nationalism (Swadeshi movement). She promoted the concept of the village school and suggested a plan for a national educational structure covering preschool through university (Verma, 1969, p. 245). However, the most far reaching educational influence was caused by two world famous figures, Mahatma Gandhi and Maria Montessori.

In 1937, Gandhi introduced the Basic Education Scheme (also called the Wardha Scheme), in anticipation of Britain's return of home-rule to India. Briefly, it was designed to give India a free, compulsory education system set up on a national scale. The medium of instruction would be the mother tongue of the region. The schools

would be self-supporting through the sale of handicrafts which the school children would make. This plan seemed to answer both the need for free, universal education and the problem of funding (Niak & Nurullah, 1974, pp. 379-381). A committee was charged with setting this plan into a working model in 1937 (Verma, 1969, p. 19).

Maria Montessori arrived in Madras in 1939 to give a training course in her system of educating young children. She was popularly received and traveled extensively throughout the nation. World War II suddenly broke out as she was preparing to leave India. Since she was Italian, the British-ruled Indian government detained her until the war was over. During that time, however, she was allowed to continue training teachers in the Montessori system. She met Tagore, Gandhi, and Nehru (who later became India's first Prime Minister) and exerted considerable influence on the educational scene. Though she returned to Europe when the war ended, she came back to India at the age of 78 and established a model school for the Maharaja of Gwalior. "That same year, her major books were translated into Indian dialects" (Standing, 1957, p. 70). Though many preschools carry the Montessori name in India today, only Bombay, Madras, and Delhi have schools which are affiliated with Montessori International.

Verma (1969) suggested that although Montessori's influence led to some expansion of pre-primary education, it was "mostly confined to the urban areas" (p. 19). He also revealed that Gandhi "disliked the standardization of the Montessori method" (p. 19) and felt that preschool education should reflect the life style of the community. Gandhi's rejection of Montessori programs, coupled with his political power, caused the Central Advisory Board of Education to adopt an educational plan in 1944 based on Gandhian ideals. The Basic Education Scheme was renamed the Sargent Plan and was adjusted to promote the following goals as reported by Niak and Nurullah (1974):

1. Learning [is] through activity, which may be basic crafts. Education on the lower level would pay for itself.
2. The three R's are no longer by themselves adequate for efficient citizenship.
3. A student should be prepared to take his place in society.
4. He should be inspired to continue his education. (p. 394)

A salient feature of the Sargent Plan was a provision for "pre-primary education for children between three and six years of age" (Niak & Nurullah, 1974, p. 393). Highly

significant was the recognition that this "impressive, plastic, and educationally potent period of a child's life [had previously] escaped the attention of our planners" (Verma, 1969, p. 19).

India achieved independence from British rule in 1947. Since that time a succession of five-year plans have produced guidelines in an attempt to educate the masses. In 1953, the government appointed a committee on Early Childhood Education. Its role was to make suggestions for the development of a government policy concerning the future of the education of young children in India. The committee stated that "pre-primary education should no more remain a parental duty" (Verma, 1969, p. 20) and suggested that the early childhood classes might be added to the existing school programs.

Pankajam (1970) outlined a prebasic education program based on Gandhi's philosophy:

2½ to 4 years--give child opportunity to listen, providing simple songs and stories.

4 years--useful and purposeful activities (shall be given).

1. cleaning classroom
2. gardening

3. cleaning cotton, spinning, promote dignity of labor
4. reading instruction, writing
5. developing right attitudes towards health, nutrition, sanitation
6. establishing close contact with parents, community (pp. 52-56)

In 1964, the Kothari Education Commission recommended that priority be given to elementary education, with state level pre-primary education centers. Since that time successive Five-Year Plans have made small advances in preschool education.

Largely due to the efforts of volunteer organizations, the government has undertaken an experimental early childhood program under the present Five-Year Plan. This project, called the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), covers 30 areas related to child development. Those visible in the educational scene are the areas of nutrition, health, development of an early childhood education curriculum, and implementation of this curriculum in participating schools (Malani, Note 1).

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURES

Four major sources of early childhood education are available in the Union Territory of Delhi. These are: parochial schools, public schools, government corporation schools (Delhi and New Delhi are under separate administration), and private schools. Permission to visit most of the institutions was granted by the head masters. The exceptions were the government schools. In those cases, the head of the Department of Education in each corporation gave permission, with the approval of the Union Ministry of Education.

The schools were chosen primarily through the recommendations of Indian educators associated with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). This establishment is responsible for the collection and compilation of data pertaining to the health, education, and welfare of Indian society. It disseminates information to various government and private agencies and advises such groups as they request.

The following schools were chosen to represent an overview of preschool education in the capital district:

1. Carmel Convent--Catholic parochial school for girls, using traditional diocesan curriculum.
2. Sahoday School--Catholic parochial school for boys, using diocesan curriculum augmented with Western child development philosophy.
3. Bal Bahrati School--Public school for boys and girls, using a full Montessori curriculum.
4. Maliviya Nagar School--Government corporation school for boys and girls serving the inner-city, using curriculum from the Integrated Child Development Scheme.
5. Chirag Village School--Government school as above, serving suburban rural children.
6. Panchshilla Park Montessori School--Private school for boys and girls, using curriculum with limited Montessori influence.
7. Happy Hours School--Private school for boys and girls emphasizing an experimental approach to early childhood education.

The conditions occurring at the time of the observational visits limited both the quality and quantity of information collected. The time period permitted for the visits was short and the children could not be observed for a complete daily schedule. Most of the children had

not seen a foreign lady previously and displayed curiosity as well as shyness. Many of the teachers had worked out a plan displaying only the children's singing talents. A normal routine was not usually evident. Some of the teachers were visibly nervous, as they thought the visits might in some way "reflect on their positions" (Sharma, Note 2). Even though an interpreter was present, conversations with the Hindi speaking teachers were stilted.

As most of the information had to be absorbed visually, a facilitating outline was developed. (See Appendix A, Observational Outline, p. 53). Questions asked of the authorities were also difficult to communicate and answers were not as complete as the author had hoped for. (See Appendix B, Interview Questions, p. 54).

CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTIONS OF PROGRAMS

Most Delhi early childhood education programs enroll boys and girls, ages three to six years. At age six or at the compulsory school age of seven, children enroll in the First-Standard Primary class. Even though preschool is not at this time compulsory, a variety of programs are available.

Parochial Schools (Catholic)

The parochial schools in the Union Territory of Delhi operate early childhood programs enrolling children at age three. The unified syllabus of parochial schools is formulated under diocesan direction. Funding comes from both the Catholic Church and tuition fees based on the income of the parents. Preschool sections, segregated according to the sex of the child, are part of the primary school facilities.

The student bodies of parochial schools are made up of middle and upper class parents, although a few poor children are mixed into the regular classes. Some parochial schools hold afternoon classes for poor children.

Uniforms are required to minimize income class distinction and reduce problems resulting from favoritism.

Both Christians and non-Christians attend parochial schools. They are considered to be prestige institutions with high standards and good facilities. Convent-educated brides of all faiths are sought after as marriage partners. Once a child has been admitted to a school, his "seat" is assured throughout his school career. Placement is selective. An examination is given to judge the child's ability to succeed in the system. Recommendations from socially prominent community members are extremely helpful in aiding the child's case. Competition is high because "seats" are limited and the child's educational future is at stake. Children are tutored as much as possible to prepare for the entrance test. These tests usually consist of knowledge of colors, ability with puzzles, general knowledge of daily life, and the child's ability to converse freely with the adult presenting the testing information. The language of the parochial school system is English, although the parochial preschool teachers in Delhi also speak Hindi.

The preschool terms run from January through May and from July through November. Final examinations are given at the end of each term. Parents are expected to see to

the tutoring of their child one hour daily in the weeks preceding the exams (Gupta, Note 3).

Children are taught using the rote method of ancient India. It is expedient and part of the ever present philosophy that memory training is an extremely important educational objective.

The content of the early childhood program covers mathematics, art, language arts, and music. It is arranged that specific material is taught during specific months. For example, January in Nursery School is the month during which oral alphabet is introduced. During February, the children learn to count from zero to ten. (See Appendix C, p. 56, for an example of the Nursery Syllabus.) In Kindergarten, November is the month when children learn to write ten sentences on a topic. By the end of the second term, Kindergarteners are expected to read and write the cursive alphabet and work addition and subtraction problems with tens and units. (See Appendix C, p. 58, for an example of a Kindergarten Syllabus.) "Running-hand" (cursive) is introduced before printi , as it is considered to be "more natural and easier" for the young child (Verona, Note 4).

Carmel Convent School for Girls

Carmel Convent School is an institution for girls located in the embassy section of New Delhi. It is governed under the authority of the Diocese of Delhi.

The early childhood program for children ages three to five is located on the ground level floor of a modern three-story school building. The four rooms of the pre-school section, Nursery through Kindergarten, are adjacent to each other and share a large central hall. Clean and spacious, the grassy lawns are lined with large shade trees. A special play area directly behind the preschool contains swings, climbing equipment, and a sandbox.

Inside, large glass windows with colorful curtains are found in each room. Small brightly painted desks and chairs fill the rooms completely. The walls are painted light blue on the lower half and white on the upper half. Rows of pictures depicting nursery rhymes are hung near the ceiling, slanted downward. Posters of the children's work and teachers charts are hung below the pictures. A blackboard is placed on one end wall. Fluorescent lights add brightness to the already sunny effect. Two ceiling fans are in each room. In one corner stands a closed cabinet with small toys appearing through the windowed

doors. A teachers' desk is directly in front of the blackboard.

The teacher-pupil ratio is 40 to 1. The room is approximately 15 x 20 feet.

The schedule starts at 7:30 a.m. with prayer and assembly. It is strictly observed along the following pattern:

8:00 Prayer, games

8:30 Music, written work, reading, mathematics

10:30 Break for snack

11:00 Art, gym

12:00 Dismissal

In the summer, the schedule is moved to 7:30 through 11:30 due to the heat.

No Montessori apparatus is visible. Plastic alphabet letters, paper, pencils, and note books are available. Crayons, clay, paint, and colored paper are used for art activities.

The teacher uses lecture and demonstration techniques, combined with rote. Children stand to recite and sit to write. They react to the teacher with serious concentration, somewhat in unison, as the response cue is taken from her facial expressions and mannerisms.

The content of the Carmel Convent preschool education program is carefully spelled out in the syllabus and consistently followed. In general, it covers reading and writing in English, numeral recognition, mathematic operations with tens and units, songs, general knowledge, and art activities. Physical discipline is not used with young children who are removed from class if they misbehave.

Sahoday School for Boys

Sahoday is a new school located on the outskirts of New Delhi. The building has been completed only recently. Classes are not in session at this time. As Sahoday is under diocesan authority, main points in the early childhood syllabus will be followed. However, Arch Bishop Fernandez has mandated the incorporation of Western preschool philosophy into the existing curriculum structure. Advice was sought from the author, who is the director of the Early Childhood Center at the American Embassy School. Changes in proposed environment, methods, and activities were suggested, which were derived from the Child Development Associate program at the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. At this time most of the changes which can be observed are related to environment. Although desks and chairs are still standard equipment in the preschool

rooms, large rugs have been installed for floor circle activities. One room has been designated for free play and will be set up in interest-centers.

Public Schools

Public schools are owned by the residential community in which they are found. Financing comes from land sale shares and tuition fees.

To be admitted to a public school, residency requirements must be fulfilled. The child is then given an entrance exam, and the parent is interviewed. (See Appendix D, p. 77, for written observation of entrance examination.) A good recommendation from an outstanding community member is helpful. Once admitted, the student's "seat" is reserved throughout his school career. No uniforms are required. Public schools offer a variety of extra curricular activities. They have more equipment than other schools, for fees are high. Both boys and girls attend the same school. Due to the fact that attending children are from middle or upper social stratas, the schools provide parental desired social contacts. High competition exists for grades, with results of tests listed publicly for even the youngest level of students.

Though public schools are not all using Montessori philosophy in the preschool syllabus, they all use the Montessori apparatus in their classrooms. The language medium is Hindi in the preschool sections, though English is introduced as a second language in the primary school.

Bal Bahrati School

Bal Bahrati School is a prestige institution located in an older section of New Delhi. It is a public school whose syllabus is developed in cooperation with other public schools in the city. It houses a Montessori Teacher's Training Institution which is affiliated with the International Montessori Organization.

The preschool department is located on the second floor of a four-story building housing the entire school and college complex. The younger children join the primary section for outdoor play. A large, well equipped playground containing slides, swings, rocking toys, and climbing apparatus is located near the entrance. The lawns are neatly groomed, though no shade trees are present.

Inside, the rooms are designed to provide maximum sunlight. Approximately 20 x 40 feet in size, the length is amplified by the presence of long windows on each end

wall. A porch-like corridor connects all the rooms on the outside walls. Floors are made of marble tile. Walls are painted a light color, with a blackboard placed at the child's eye level. Small shelves line the walls. They contain many complete sets of Montessori apparatus. A bulletin board on which children's papers are displayed is hung on a wall at an adult's eye level. Small child-size floor tables and mats are in place on the entire floor. No desks or chairs are visible. Approximately 35 children of mixed ages ranging from three to six years are with one teacher.

Classes run from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. There is no fixed schedule. The teacher interchanges activities according to the mood of the children. She makes sure that time is allowed for demonstration of apparatus, small group activities, music, and outside play. Time is also allotted for a mid-morning snack which the children bring from home.

The equipment is a complete range of Montessori apparatus. Several sets are available in each room. Specific apparatus is introduced to small groups of children who are allowed to change to a different apparatus after they have finished the work they are given. Rote teaching methods are not observed. Rhyme, dance, stories,

and music are included in the daily routine. Children are also taught to read and write Hindi and work with numbers. (A syllabus could not be obtained.) After three years in the preschool section, the children advance to Second-Standard class in primary.

A great deal of interaction is observed between teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil. The atmosphere is fairly quiet, as the children seem to be completely engrossed in what they are doing. Discipline is handled on the "no rewards (sweets), no punishment basis" (Ahuja, Note 5). Praise is given as a positive reinforcement.

Government Corporation Schools

The Delhi Municipal Corporation (DMC) and New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) administer schools semi-sponsored by tax-based government funds. Under the auspices of the Central Social Welfare Board and the Indian Council of Child Welfare, the funding is approved by the Ministry of Social Welfare. No entrance test is given since the schools are opened to all. Nevertheless, there are a limited number of "seats" in the preschool section. Classes are filled on a first come, first served basis. A minimal fee which is within the means of the poorest parent is charged. "Parents would [thus] be able

to have a sense of contribution to their child's education" (Pande, Note 6).

In spite of the availability of preschool education, the majority of the children are not attending. In 1973, 532,287 children were eligible to enroll in the two municipal systems of Delhi Union Territory. Only 7,954, or about one and one-half percent of the children, were registered (Third All-India National Survey, 1977, p. 23). "About five percent of children eligible to enroll this year (1977) are attending" (Pande, Note 6). These low figures are due to several factors. For example, children whose parents can afford the tuition of prestige schools do not attend government schools. Many parents do not consider education necessary for girls and keep them home. Some parents are not aware of the programs. Other parents have had bad educational experiences themselves and want to avoid the system. As one parent explains, "I am afraid they beat Rajesh" (Ram, Note 7).

Both corporation municipalities participate in the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). Health and nutrition are incorporated into the school program as part of the scheme. Parents must produce a medical certificate stating that the child is in good health at the time of registration. Corporation Health Departments work with

the schools to innoculate the children against cholera, polio, smallpox, and tetanus. Children are taught hygiene as a part of the daily routine. For example, each child is expected to furnish a towel and drinking cup for his personal use while in school. Two high-protein biscuits (cookies) are issued at mid-morning to provide nourishment. Children are also encouraged to bring an additional snack from their homes.

School is divided into two semesters, January through May and July through November. Preschool is held Monday through Saturday in half-day sessions. The language medium is Hindi.

The government schools lack funds and have poor facilities compared to other schools. Conscious effort is made by the teachers to make the rooms attractive.

Using the project method, for example "common fruits," the teachers instruct the children according to the syllabus objectives. Teachers employ the ancient rote method as well as the lecture method. Song, rhymes, and stories are used to reinforce new learnings. Through such activities the children develop the capability of putting thoughts into sequence. Cultural awareness is taught through use of dance and drama. The syllabus is not followed as it pertains to reading and writing.

Instead, printing Hindi alphabet and memorizing written words are an important part of the preschool program. Teachers are required to write the parents regularly concerning the child's progress. Parents are required to attend school meetings once a month. Unlike other preschool programs in Delhi, the municipal schools do not have examinations at the end of each term. Impact of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) project has resulted in yearly training courses designed to improve the techniques and qualifications of the early childhood teachers. Qualifications are currently based upon the completion of Higher Secondary (years Eleven and Twelve) and an additional year of Nursery Education. Principals are also expected to attend the training sessions, so that they have a better understanding of the early childhood curriculum. Inservice programs which introduce new ideas to the teachers are held once a month by corporation authorities.

The corporations employ school Inspectors, who visit the preschools regularly to insure that the syllabus is being maintained as consistently as possible. Inspectors look at methods, preparation, and use of materials. Each early childhood classroom is equipped with various pieces

of Montessori apparatus, even though the school syllabus is not based on the Montessori system.

Teachers are given an expense allowance of 10 rupees per month ($1.25) which they use to purchase indigenous materials with which they make toys or equipment. At times, the children make simple items for sale at fund raising events. Profits from such sales are used to buy special equipment, but cannot cover basic costs as suggested by the Gandhi Basic Education Scheme.

Maliviya Nagar

Maliviya Nagar is an NDMC government school. The building is barrack style and located in an old section of the city.

One wing of the primary school is designated as the preschool section. Outside equipment consists of a balance beam, climbing equipment, and a teeter-totter. Shade is provided by a long porch which runs along one side of the classrooms.

Inside, the walls are painted black on the lower half and white on the upper half, minimizing dirty handprints. The high placed windows do not have glass. Instead they are barred and shuttered for protection against burglary. A low shelf is attached to one wall

and is supporting plastic cups and towels. A few small tables are lined up on one side of the room. At the end of the room, an open cupboard stands. It contains masks and stick-puppets which the teacher has made. A single ceiling fan and an overhead bulb are in each room. Floors are made of cement, covered with handloom rugs.

There are 35 children per teacher. All the rooms are 15 x 20 feet in size. Children are grouped according to age. For example, there is one class of three year olds.

The daily schedule is as follows:

8:00 Prayer, assembly, games

9:30 Snack

10:00-10:30 Project work, apparatus

10:30 Stories, counting

11:00 Drawing and handwork, alternated with alphabet

12:00 Lunch

Every Saturday at 11:00 a.m., the entire pre-primary school presents a group activity representing their weekly work. Prizes are awarded for the best presentation.

Each classroom has in it parts of the Montessori set of apparatus. The pieces observed were in bad condition. Each child is given a paper tablet in which his written work is recorded. For general practice, slates and chalk are used. Also available to the children are puppets,

dolls, and doll furniture which the teacher has made. These items are carefully handled. Plastic Hindi alphabet letters are standard room equipment.

During presentation of an apparatus and/or the weekly project, the lecture method is used. The children sit in rows on the floor rugs and repeat words after the teacher. The teacher asks questions which are answered by one word responses.

The children are expected to sit quietly until they are given work to do. Some children were observed to be sitting over an hour while waiting for their turn with equipment. During the music-drama time, most children laugh openly, though a few retain disinterested expressions on their faces. No physical punishment is used. Daily biscuits usually given at snack time are withheld from a child if he misbehaves.

Chirag Village School

Chirag Village School is located in a small agriculture community on the outskirts of the city. It comes under the supervision of the NDMC government.

The building is styled in the barrack plan, typical of most government schools. Unlike Maliviya Nagar, a small grouping of shade trees is growing near the

preschool wing. Climbing apparatus and rocking-chairs are placed within the shaded area.

Inside, the rooms are dark, providing cool shadows to relieve the tropical heat. Twenty-eight children are contained in rooms approximately 20 x 25 feet in size. No tables and chairs are in the room. However, colorful cloth rugs are on the floor. Low shelves hold a few pieces of Montessori equipment and teacher-made toys. Less equipment is located in these rooms compared to Maliviya Nagar.

The teacher explains, "the authorities have asked me to make a time table, but we don't stick to it because the children may want something different" (Singh, Note 8). Indeed, school opens at 7:30 a.m. for those children who come early.

Materials which the teacher sets out for the class are as follows: chalk, slates, crayons, Montessori apparatus, and glass beads to be strung on wire. All the children have something to do because so many sets of beads and string are available.

The teacher introduces Hindi alphabet by instructing the children to write in sand. Though the rote method is used, interaction between students and teacher is observed. When a child leaves the pre-primary section he will know

how to write alphabet letters and numbers from zero through nine.

In this school some children are preparing for an exam which they must take to enter primary. If they do not pass the exam, they will be labeled "backward" (Singh, Note 8). A note will be written to notify the parents. Discipline is handled by the parents, who are immediately called if a problem arises.

Both DMC and NDMC schools use the same syllabus, which was developed as part of the Integrated Child Development Scheme. However, slight differences in application of ICDS methods and techniques were observed when schools of the two systems were visited. For example:

1. The DMC classrooms were more colorful due to the fact that greater use was made of teacher-made charts and other aids.
2. Children in the DMC program appeared to be happier and more relaxed.
3. Teachers in DMC classes used praise more often with the children than did their NDMC counterparts.
4. Teaching methods in the DMC schools seemed to be more consistent with the philosophies expressed

in the syllabus than methods used in the NDMC schools.

An attempt was made by the author to discuss the goals of early childhood education in India with the Department of Education administrators in both municipal corporations. DMC authorities were fully cooperative and expressed concern over the educational needs of young children under their jurisdiction. They were proud of the ICDS project, and they were excited about the improvements they had made in their schools. The NDMC authorities were not available for an interview. It is not clear what their position has been regarding the ICDS training program for teachers or why their programs seem to lag behind the DMC schools. However, it must be noted that the DMC schools were selected by the pre-primary Inspector, while the NDMC schools were randomly selected by the author. Perhaps other NDMC schools would have given a better impression during the observations.

Private Schools

The private schools in Delhi are owned by individuals or organizations. They may be profit or non-profit institutions. The fees vary accordingly. Each school formulates its own syllabus. The Montessori name is often

advertised to connote the existence of a preschool section. Montessori apparatus may also be available in the classroom, though teachers are not necessarily trained in its use in a Montessori affiliated teacher training institution.

The language may be Hindi or English, or any dialect the school prefers. Educational standards in these schools can be high or low, depending upon the administration. These co-educational institutions are all made up of middle or upper class clientele. Parents feel that even the "worst private schools are preferable over the best government schools" (Sharma, Note 2). Children are enrolled through recommendation and entrance exam results. Many of the schools do not have classes beyond grade four, causing a major shift for the family as they attempt to meet the requirements of the next school. Children who do not achieve admission to parochial or public schools often find a place in private schools.

Panchshilla Park Montessori School

Panchshilla Park Montessori School is a non-profit private school operated by parents of a nearby housing colony.

The facility is a small, four room building located on a grassy lot, lined with shade trees. Rocking toys, swings, and climbing equipment painted in bright colors are provided for outdoor play.

Varying in size, the rooms are painted in light colors and are equipped with ceiling fans and fluorescent lights. At least one standard-size window is in each room. Bookshelves line the walls, containing parts of Montessori sets and various teaching materials. Small tables and chairs line one wall, though carpet area takes up most of the room.

Class sizes vary from 18 to 23 children per teacher. There seems to be no relationship between room size and student numbers, for the smallest room contains the most children. Rather, the size of the class seems dependent on the ages of the children who are grouped by yearly age from three to six years. Approximate room sizes range from 12 x 18 feet to 12 x 20 feet.

School opens at 9:00 a.m. and closes at 12:30 p.m. No specific time schedule is maintained, though time is allowed for lecture, work on apparatus, written work, music, dance, and outdoor play.

Montessori equipment and materials such as crayons, paper, paint, pencils, and clay are used. A few toy trucks and tractors are also observed on the shelves.

The teachers use demonstration and rote methods. Questions are asked which have one acceptable answer. Replies are given in unison or individually until each child has answered. The correct use of apparatus is demonstrated to the class as a whole. When not enough apparatus is available for each child to have something to do, they must wait quietly for their turn. Consequently, many children look bored. One boy asks the teacher, "Auntie can I play with the truck?" She answers, "First you sit properly." He starts to cry; she then gives him the truck. Most of the morning the teacher does not interact with the children. Discipline methods are up to the teacher. Physical punishment is not allowed.

Happy Hours School

Another type of private school in Delhi could not be visited. However, it should be mentioned as it is the only school of its kind in the city.

Happy Hours School is located in an upper class residential section. It is financed through high tuition fees and money raised by the Suri Foundation. The

Director, Miss Suri, has developed her own preschool curriculum based on her training at the Frobel Institute in England. She has also been influenced by her personal meetings with Maria Montessori.

The school's objectives center upon individualization according to the child's needs. (See Appendix C, p. 73, for Objectives.) Children are admitted at age two and continue in the program through age 10. "In actual functioning, children of different ages within an age range of two to three years and working at different levels are put under the charge of a teacher who is considered head of a Family. She looks after the requirements of her Family Children" (Suri Foundation, Note 9).

The teaching method is called the Project Method. This is essentially a topic learned through work activities. Firsthand experiences are used whenever possible. Children are encouraged to follow their inclinations and work at their own pace. Pressure is not put on the child to perform for competitive tests at the completion of a project. Groups work at small tables and rugs. Children are admitted on the basis of a general intelligence test. At age six, children read and write simple sentences in English and Hindi and work math problems. The director encourages teacher-pupil interaction and disapproves of

the lecture and rote methods. "We do not promote learning through mugging, but promote learning through understanding" (Suri, Note 10).

Program Effectiveness as Relevant to Stated Goals

Kabir (1971) writes, "In India, as elsewhere, the systems of education have conformed to the ideals and objectives that the people have set before themselves" (p. 169).

What are the general goals of early childhood education in Delhi and how are these goals met? Chidbhavananda (1964) feels the primary goal is to "raise the standard of living through exposure of the young to healthy environment" (p. 61). Certainly even the most lacking of the preschools observed is by comparison to some of the family living conditions a healthy environment.

"New emphasis," states Niak and Nurullah (1974), "is now being placed on services to the preschool group from the viewpoint of improving health and productivity of the population as a whole and preparing a strong base for universal primary education" (p. 19). The health clinics in the government schools, daily protein biscuits, and hygiene training are means to achieve this goal.

Again, Kabir (1971) writes, "memorizing, repetition, reflection and reasoning were [in ancient times] methods of developing the intellect" (p. 182). Are they today? Puthumana (1977) does not feel memorization, at least in its present use, is worthwhile. He says,

> Teaching that is tailored to make the learner memorize rather than understand what is being taught is very taxing. The examination as it is conducted today may declare many children failures purely on account of the fact that they have not been able to reproduce what they have memorized. Stagnation is the result. (p. 1)

Despite the objections of a minority of educational critics like Puthumana, memory training is pursued throughout the system, from preschool through university. For example, a preschool child in a class of 45 learns by rote, as that is the most expedient method for the time allotted; a university student answers test questions verbatim as in the text perhaps to insure that the information has been communicated to him. While rote or other memorization training techniques can be misused by a poor teacher, they are valid tools for developing self-discipline. Concepts learned by memory provide a basic

structure upon which thinking and reasoning skills are built. Puthumana does not take into account that the stagnation he describes may be the product of a "weeding out" of non-achievers, rather than a "trampling down" of possible achievers. It must also be taken into consideration that a goal of over-populated countries like India is often a certain regimentation designed to provide organization and structure in the society.

The main indicator of program effectiveness is how well the various school systems in Delhi fulfill the requirements of their own syllabus. In so much as can be observed, the public, parochial, and minicipal schools not only follow their syllabus in preschool, but provide continuity in goals throughout the child's school career. The private schools are entirely dependent upon individuals to administer their programs and so achievements vary. Participation in the Integrated Child Development Scheme has enabled the government schools to produce more broad-based results through regular inspection and in-service training programs.

The primary educational goal, universal education, is fulfilled partially by the government's interest in early childhood programs. Through the Integrated Child Development Scheme which has upgraded curriculum and made

preschool within the means of many families, children and parents are gaining positive attitudes toward education. "Children who begin education in the pre-primary section are continuing to attend in primary" (Gupta, Note 11). "Children who begin education in primary are dropping out even though they are at compulsory attendance age" (Malani, Note 1). The difference could be the preschool experience.

Yet survey testing of corporation schools shows that achievement is not significant between those children who received preschool education and those who did not. Perhaps, Pande is correct when she points out that the survey was not valid due to "poor testing conditions." "At this time," she continues, "the government cannot put more money into preschool education" (Note 6). Its first priority is continuing to be mandatory, universal primary education and not preschool education.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

As pointed out earlier, education has been a part of India's heritage since ancient times. Early childhood education has traditionally been considered proper and relevant to the needs of the society. Yet, no administrator contacted during research for this paper has been able to answer questions which ask how the goals of modern preschool education help the child become a member of Indian society. One ancient goal seems still to be the product of the educational system, that is segregation of classes of people.

Another characteristic of a crowded society evident in the schools is "survival of the fittest." Yet, perhaps children who are kept waiting in under-equipped classrooms are learning patience and humility. These are positive attributes in a person living in an over-crowded nation.

One ancient view which comes across strongly to the observer is the respect for life and its continued rebirth through subsequent generations. Children are cherished and taught to respect their elders in a way that makes a

strong impression on Western minds. The quiet preschool classrooms and absence of discipline problems may result from successful application of teaching respect for others.

In India, there exists a strong emotional commitment to the needs of the young. Their interests are deeply felt by the nation. Interested groups, such as the Indian Association of Pre-primary Education, are making the public increasingly aware of children's educational needs.

India is a nation emerging from antiguity to the nuclear age in less than one hundred years. Many needs have to be met, new programs have to be explored. In this time of tumultuous change, India is focusing on early childhood education. It will not reverse its direction.

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Appendix A

Observation Outline

I. School

- A. Location
- B. Authority/administration

II. Environment for Learning

- A. Outside
- B. Inside
  1. Pupil-teacher ratio
  2. Description of room

III. Schedule

IV. Equipment

V. Observed Teaching Methods

- A. Style
- B. Content
- C. Reaction of children to teacher
- D. Discipline

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. Is there an organization or governmental body which is in charge of preschool education?
2. Describe the programs which are available in the Delhi area, in India in general.
3. Explain the differences between these schools, what are their educational goals?
4. How many children are enrolled in early childhood education programs in this metropolitan area? How many children would be eligible?
5. Is education at this age compulsory?
6. What are the entrance requirements for the schools described above?
7. How are these schools financed?
8. What philosophies are these programs based on, who determines the philosophy?
9. Explain the status of the Montessori programs, are they affiliated with Montessori International?
10. Is there an over-all syllabus for preschool education in the city?
11. How are the goals being met as set forth in the syllabus?
12. What kind of equipment is available?
13. What instructional methods and techniques are used?
14. How is discipline handled?
15. What language is used in the schools?

16. What schedule exists, half-day, full-day? (hours) (also yearly)?

17. What are the class sizes, room sizes?

18. How are the children evaluated?

19. How are parents and community involved in the programs?

20. How do the early childhood programs (goals) help the child to become part of his society?

Appendix C

Carmel Convent--Syllabus

NURSERY - DRAWING - HANDWORK - 1974

DRAWING

1. Completing the book given.
2. Colouring cut-outs.
3. Free drawing.

HANDWORK

1. Paper tearing.
2. Paper folding.
3. Paper crushing.
4. Sticking.
5. Making objects with the teacher's help.

Drawings and cut-outs to be displayed on the Display Board.

NURSERY - ENGLISH - MATHS - 1974

Month	Subjects
January-February	1. Nursery rhymes and poems. 2. Alphabets--oral--a to z. 3. Counting numbers 1 to 10. 4. Learning the names of colours by colouring cut-outs; e.g., green leaves, yellow sun, etc. 5. Learning the names of fruits by colouring cut-outs; e.g., apples, mangoes, etc. 6. Learning the names of animals by seeing pictures of them. (Nursery Library)
March-April	1. Nursery rhymes and poems. 2. Recognition of alphabets a to z. 3. Recognition of size and shape (familiar objects). 4. Pattern writing with crayons. 5. Writing numbers 1 to 5. 6. Drawing sets 1 to 5.
May-June	Holiday Homework 1. Rhymes and poems--given 2. Sounds of animals--given 3. Parts of the body--given (Typed sheets are given to all the children.) 4. Pattern writing--Introductory Book to be completed. 5. Number Book 1 to 10 to be completed.
July-August	1. Poems and rhymes. 2. Numbers--writing 1 to 10. 3. Drawing sets 1 to 10. 4. Phonetic alphabets a to z. 5. Handwriting abc following the cursive writing book I.
September-October-November-December	1. Rhymes and poems. 2. Phonetics a to z. 3. Writing alphabets a to z. 4. Filling in the missing numbers.

KINDERGARTEN - ENGLISH - 1974

Month	Writing
January	1. Writing pattern. 2. Alphabet letters.
February	1. Alphabet letters (small). 2. Two letter words.
March	1. Three letter words.
April	1. Four and five letter words.
May	REVISION AND TEST
July	1. Small sentences with three letter words.
August	1. Simple sentences with four or five letter words.
September	To copy paras.
October	1. Make their own sentences. 2. Write five sentences on a topic.
November	1. Write ten sentences on a topic. 2. Revision and Examination.

KINDERGARTEN - MODERN MATHS - 1974

Month	Counting	Number Work	Page No
January	Counting Nos. 1 to 10	Recognition of numbers. Writing Nos. 1-10.	1 to 21
February	Counting Nos. 10 to 20	Writing Nos. 10-20.	22 to 42
March	Counting Nos. 20 to 50	Writing Nos. 20-50. Writing in words Nos. 1 to 10.	43 to 63
April	Counting Nos. 50 to 100	Writing Nos. 50-100. Writing in words 10 to 20.	64 to 80
May	REVISION AND EXAMINATION		
July	Counting in 10s, 5s, 3s and 2s	Writing in words 20 to 50. Addition and subtraction of one digit.	81 to 96
August	Counting backwards 100 to 50	Writing in words 50 to 100. Addition and subtraction of two digits.	97 to 110
September	Counting backwards	Tens and units. Addition.	111 to 134
October		Tens and units. Subtraction.	135 to 148
November	REVISION		
December	EXAMINATION		

KINDERGARTEN - 1974

Month	General Knowledge	Singing
January	Colours; my pet animals; fruits I eat.	Good Morning to You; Hush a By Baby
February	Wild animals; birds I see; parts of the body; things I can do.	Oh Good Morning; Baby Turn Around; Thank You
March	Flowers; things I see in the sky and in the nature.	Merrily Sings the Pussy; Blue Bells; Here Are My Eyes
April	My family; my class.	God's Beautiful World; If I Had a Ball; I Have a Tooth Brush
July	Cries of animals, their homes, their babies; One word.	Two Little Eyes to Look at God; Bum Bum Clippity Clip
August	One and many; things I eat and drink; my baby sister.	Old John Brown; I Have a Little Bicycle; Here's My Handkerchief
September	Things I see on the street; people who help me.	Gallop Upto Market
October	Opposites; my school	With Basket on My Arm
November	REVISION	
December	EXAMINATION	

KINDERGARTEN - ENGLISH - 1974

Month	Reader	Recitation
January	Revision of the alphabets (small and big letters). Two letter words like: at, it is on.	Make a Ball; My Papa.
February	New Horizon. Look and read and picture reading. Pages 1 to 6.	One, One Here I Come; Clapping Rhyme; Two Fat Gentlemen.
March	Questions and answers. One and more than one. Pages 7 to 11.	Tea Party; How Tall.
April	Use of an, on, in, under, near. Pages 12 to 18.	Little Bird; April Showers.
May	REVISION AND TEST	REVISION
July	Negative sentences. Simple actions by pictures. Numbers by pictures. Pages 28 to 40.	Way Up the Apple Tree; Grasshopper; Crossing the Road.
August	How many colours. Picture postcards. Which is true. Pages 41 to 47.	Daisies Eyes; Paws and Claws.
September	Opposites by pictures. Look Out. Poem. Little Tommy Tucker. Questions and answers. Pages 48 to 57.	Pretty Birds Don't Haste Away; That Dear Little Cat.
October	A story in pictures. More questions. Riddles, animals and their babies. Pages 58 to 73.	The Clock

Month	Reader	Recitation
November	More questions. Riddles look at the pictures and read the sentences. Pages 63 to 73.	Revision
December	REVISION AND EXAMINATION	REVISION

Delhi Municipal Corporation

Education Department

Kashmere Gate, Delhi-6

No. N/Shiksha/72 Date:

Under Delhi Municipal Corporation with 35 students list--

Ideal Programme for Nursery/Pre-Basic Schools

Education is determined by the needs of the small children only at Nursery stage when foundation is laid down for the planned future improvement and complete individual personality of the child. Therefore, Nursery Schools starting any such programme should keep in mind the following objectives of nursery education:

1. Body building measures for children be taken to cover body weakness and muscular development.
2. To guide the children to adopt good habits for upkeep of the health such as putting on their own clothes themselves, to be ready, and to take meals.
3. To develop the desired appreciable attitude, to encourage the child to participate in the health programmes, to become aware of his rights and privileges being a member of the society, to look after himself, and to watch his rights to save the property of others as well as of himself.

4. To create firm willingness in the child to express, to understand, to confess, and to control his emotional outbursts.
5. To encourage the child with regard to his beautification in all aspects.
6. To make the child aware of the world in which he lives, to develop his desire for study and research, etc.
7. To provide chance for mental progress to the child and to develop his working trend.
8. To bring the capability in the child to express his thoughts freely and without any hinderance.
9. Programme should be chalked out for the nursery schools to imply the above mentioned points. Even then the plan should be easy to be adopted for the children in the prevailing atmosphere.

Children of the 3 to 5 years age group can be admitted into Nursery Schools. During educational sessions, one week or 10 days in July, October, and January are kept opened for admission to Nursery Schools. Admission should be accepted on the prescribed Admission Form duly completed and presented by the parents and on the basis of health certificate.

Children having low health and lack of wisdom that can effect other children should be admitted with other ordinary children.

For more physical and mental retarded children, advice from able medical experts should be sought.

A child who has crossed the age of five if he requires may be allowed to continue for some time in the nursery school till he gets ready to enter the primary school.

Duration and Strength of Students of Nursery School

In one section of nursery school, the ratio of teacher student should not exceed 35:1. Nursery school may have more than one section to provide adequately. Under no circumstances should there be crowding at the nursery school. Adequate indoor and outdoor space should be provided for children's free activities. On an average each child's outdoor space should be 80-100 sq. ft. per child and indoor space should be 30-40 sq. ft. per child.

Nursery school children should be provided with a separate room where they may be able to work.

They should be provided every opportunity to maintain the happy and colourful atmosphere of their play. If attached to a primary school then the latter should not

interfere in its programme. It is worth suggesting that for use the outdoor space may be adequately fenced. Close to the classroom provision should be made for drinking water and bathrooms.

Furnishing

Daree (carpet), rectangular table (2'x3½'x19" height) with 12 light comfortable chairs in proportion to the table, bulletin board, blackboards for children's use, open and low racks, teacher's chair, table, and cupboard.

Provisions

1. For outdoor activity: jungle gym, fast moving boats, see saw or balance board, tricycle, scooter, motor car, sand pile and toys to play in sand, old tyres, skipping ropes, ball, and circle.
2. Provisions for creative play: bricks for building houses, wooden and plastic rods in creative colours.
3. Doll's equipment: doll, bed bedding, household utensils, and furniture.
4. Equipment for developing hard muscles: scissors, bowls, paper for folding, clay, paste, tray.
5. Music, dance, and drama equipment: drum and sticks to play it, bells for ankles, gramophone records, puppets and puppet house, and dress up clothes for drama.

6. Art and painting equipment: frames for putting up paintings and clasps for holding it in place, powder colours, starching brushes, unprinted newspaper, and painting board.
7. Toys: wooden toys in imitation of bus, tonga, bullock carts, car, train, etc.
8. Children's literature: picture books, charts, poetry books, and scrap books or albums.
9. Mixed: weighing scale, first aid kit, equipment for cleaning the room, furniture, mirror, nail cutter, comb, towels, bucket mug for each individual child's personal use.

Language Used in the Nursery Schools

All the activities of nursery schools would be conducted in a language familiar to the majority; other languages may be used for music, musical drama, etc. If adequate number of pictures are not available in the language to be used then books in other languages may be used.

Proposed Programme for the Nursery Schools

Certain activities are suggested here for the guidance of the teacher. These may be modified according to prevalent conditions and different age levels. It is worth

suggesting that children play with those of their age group. In nursery school they should be given minimum opportunity to mix with other age groups (bigger and smaller).

Suggested Activities

It is helpful to keep a balance between work, play, and rest. In early childhood education adherence to this balance is extremely important. If activities have to be made effective then it is extremely essential that the teacher come 20-30 minutes before children's arrival so that he may prepare the activities and have the room organized.

Suggested Activities

Maintenance of daily health and cleanliness--teacher should see to each child's personal cleanliness like nails, teeth, and hair. Teacher should also see to it that child is adequately clothed.

Teacher should maintain a monthly record of physical height, weight, and bodily gains. Suggestion of quarterly medical check ups may be presented.

Outdoor Play

Children should be provided adequate opportunity for free play. They can be without apparatus or self-discovery. Experimental or observational, musical exercises may be completed outside during outdoor play time. Following are certain outdoor activities: gardening, sand play, water, mud play, art story, nursery rhymes, drama.

Indoor Play

Independent play is one of the important parts of nursery school education. Children should be granted permission to choose play--activities desirable to them and also the apparatus which to use. Some indoor play activities: (1) doll play, (2) construction of toy house with building blocks or other apparatus, (3) art and painting, (4) paper folding, tearing, cutting, pasting, and sticking, (5) less expensive equipment like burnt match sticks, match boxes, cigarette boxes, silver paper, used greeting cards, leftover clothes, wool, and cotton may be used, (6) natural equipment and wood pieces, leaves, branches, rocks, feathers, fruit seeds may be used, (7) delicate play, (8) story telling and showing pictures, (9) drama and puppet show, (10) music and dance.

Excursions and Field Trips

Nursery school children should be taken out for a walk at least once a week so that they may observe and examine the environment around them. In these circumstances, children should observe animals, trees, flowers, birds, and other natural beauty. Children should meet doctor, postman, shopkeeper, tailor, washerman, and other such people. These are children's average likings.

Instruction of 3 Rs at Nursery School Level

At this stage students should not be given formal reading, writing, and counting, rather they should be encouraged to increase their experiences by nursery school activities. For example, their vocabulary can be increased by story telling and by poetry drama they can show expression in different ways.

Recess and Rest

Nursery schools of 4 hours duration should give children a recess of 15-20 minutes after 2 hours. They should be served light refreshment during this recess. Children should be given 15-20 minutes for rest. It should be kept in mind that no child should be forced to lie down or sleep.

Afternoon Meal

Since children from financially under privileged houses come to Corporation Schools, municipal corporation should make provision for simple nutritious meal in the afternoon. Later children should be advised to contribute towards it by their own lunch packets. Eating together would provide adequate opportunity for the child to show following discipline: washing hands and utensils, cleaning the table, etc.

It is important that the teacher should join in; this would create in the child a sense of security which at this stage is extremely important.

Children should not be granted permission to buy eatables from outside under any circumstances. Children need not bring money to school.

Completion of Day's Work

Before the child is to be sent home, teacher should have group activities like mutual conversation, games or singing songs, etc. After this children should be bid farewell in this loving atmosphere.

Nursery school teacher should maintain a diary for each child in which to note down the progress of the child. On the basis of this daily observation, a teacher may prepare quarterly reports.

Cleanliness Programme

Nursery teacher should see to it that class and equipment are clean and that they are dusted 10 minutes before the start of school.

Classroom equipment should be cleaned once a week. Bathrooms and washbasins should be kept in mind. There should be a provision for a towel, comb, bucket for each child.

Parent Teacher Relationship

Nursery school teacher should always work in close cooperation with the parents. For effective programme and easy understanding of students, there should be monthly parent teacher conferences. For this it is essential that teachers establish a close contact with the parents.

Parents should be invited to the school for an organized programme. It is also desirable that nursery school teacher should at times visit their class children.

Happy Hours School

Objectives

HAPPY HOURS METHODS OF TEACHING

PROJECT MOTIVATED LEARNING IN FAMILY GROUP SETTING

Happy Hours has innovated a special system of grouping children and teaching them with the following objectives in view:

1. To cater for the individual need of each child.
2. To ensure optimum pace of progress for each child.
3. To provide non-formal education in a healthy and happy atmosphere.
4. To establish natural integration of Nursery, K.G., and Lower Primary classes so that a child gets a good introduction to education and a strong foundation is laid during the most important phase of the life of a child.
5. To give an opportunity to children with handicaps and problems to get a fair chance to make a start in life.
6. To develop a system of education which would be suitable both for rural and urban areas of our country.

In actual functioning children of different ages within an age range of two to three years and working at different levels are put under the charge of a teacher

who is considered the head of a "Family" and looks after all the requirements of her "Family Children." The teacher gives individual assignments to each member of her "Family," keeps individual records of progress of every child, maintains close association with the parents of her "children" and looks after her "Family" during work and play.

The methods of teaching developed to suit "Family Grouping" lean heavily on Project Method. All knowledge is related to real life situations and first hand experiences. Integration of subjects is achieved by relating them to a Centre of Interest. The Project Method as developed at Happy Hours keeps in view the individual needs of a child to develop his inherent abilities on the one hand and the demands of the society and the senior schools on the other. Thus creative activities, practical work and projects are used to motivate children and to make them understand the purpose of what they are doing. Once a child's interest is aroused and he shows keenness to master more skills and gather information which need not necessarily be related to the Project, supplementary work is introduced and the remaining portion of the required syllabus is covered in a non-formal manner. Attention is always paid to the fact that even if a lesson is not directly related to the project, the child feels the need

for that lesson and understands it by relating it to his personal past experiences and knowledge.

Such a system of "Family Grouping" coupled with Project Motivated Learning has led to the following advantages:

1. The school has achieved good integration of Nursery, K.G., and Lower Primary classes; i.e., from Nursery I to class IV (age group 2+ to 10+).
2. The school has a very happy atmosphere wherein each member of the staff and student body cooperates willingly with everybody else.
3. A strong sense of loyalty to the community is developed in each member.
4. Each child works at his best, without pressures and strains of jealous competition.
5. Each child feels secure in the set up and grows up to be self confident, independent, responsible, and helpful.
6. Each child works at his optimum pace and makes better progress than in a formal set up. This is evident not only from the results achieved in Happy Hours School but also from the performance of the children when they go for admission tests in senior schools.

7. The foundation laid by such a system helps a child to grow into a pleasant and positive personality which is an asset to any community.

Souvenir
December 12, 1976
Suri Education Foundation
New Delhi

Appendix D

Entrance Test--Public School

Name: "Psychological Test"

Equipment:

1. Puzzle-board, containing nine geometric shapes.
2. Puzzle of elephant.
3. Series of matched sets of cards, showing pictures of fruits, vegetables, and animals.

Procedure:

Puzzle shapes are removed from the puzzles by the teacher. The child is directed to replace the shapes of the geometric puzzle. The child is asked the names of the pictures on the cards; following this, the child is asked to place the matching pictures together. The child is directed to put together the elephant puzzle.

Scoring:

The teacher scores the child empirically, giving a resulting score from one to five.

Appendix E

A slide/tape program describing the preschools in this paper is filed at the Curriculum Materials Center at the Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas.